

# IGNATIANA

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## St Ignatius as Retreat-Master<sup>1</sup>

### 1. His Exercitants

St Ignatius began the apostolate of the Exercises at Manresa, after the great revelation of the River Cardoner. By that time, the book of the Exercises must have been composed in its fundamental outline.

He gave the Exercises wherever he went: Manresa, Barcelona, Alcalá, Paris, Azpeitia, Venice, Rome. At first, in his own country, he used to give the retreat to simple folk and pious women. Later on, in Paris, he followed an entirely new way: he rather concentrated on professors, doctors and students of the university of Paris. Peralta, Juan de Castro, Dr Valle, Dr Marcel Gouvea, Alvaro Moscoso (the Rector of the University and later a theologian at Trent and Bishop of Pamplona), are some of the men who made the retreat under Ignatius's guidance. In Venice, and especially in Rome, Ignatius takes, so to say, a middle course. He expands his spiritual activity to embrace a wider circle than at Paris and yet remains very selective.

### 2. Phases in His Method

To the difference of retreatants corresponds also a variation in the method of giving the Exercises. The popular type predominates in the first stage. This has been described by Ignatius in the 18th annotation. We are fairly well informed about the manner in which he used to give the popular exercises, thanks to the ecclesiastical processes of Alcalá. Those exercises were not as "light" as one might think they were. The women who followed the exercises had to attend Ignatius's exhortations for a full month, several days each week and, so it seems, several times a day. He spoke about the powers of the soul, the articles of Faith, the precepts of the Church, the merit that might be obtained through temptation, the ten commandments, mortal and venial sin, examination of conscience, the third method of prayer, weekly

1. Condensed from I. Iparraguirre S.J., *Practica de los Ejercicios de San Ignacio de Loyola en vida de su Autor* (1522-1556). Rome 1946. Chapter I, 1: Expansion efectuada por San Ignacio hasta 1539, pp. 1-13. By F. Sopeña.

Confession and frequent Communion. The Gospels also afforded him subject-matter for instruction, and he used to quote from them, and from St Paul, to clarify his doctrine. His manner of speaking was conversational, plain, and had nothing of the oratorical way. Another characteristic trait of this type of retreat was his intimate contact with the retreatants' souls. Ignatius aimed at forming a deeply Christian conscience in the simple folk who came to him, with a minimum of consideration and a maximum of instruction. Still these exercises were not disconnected practices: for there is a central ideal informing them all, namely, the service of God. This is the basic idea of Ignatius's teaching as it was the norm that ruled his own life. The practice of God's service did not imply any radical transformation in the external tenor of the lives of those simple folk; they had to strive in all earnestness to fulfil faithfully all their obligations as Christians.

Contrasted with this more general type of retreat is the thorough and intensive one he preferred in later years, and which he gave in particular to his first companions in Paris. In this also the exercises lasted a full month; but they were given in a secluded place, and all the annotations and additions were scrupulously observed. Again the idea of God's service is foremost in all the meditations and inspires all the resolutions of the exercitants. Yet in Paris, unlike Manresa and Alcalá, this idea leads to, and in fact brings about, a radical external transformation, in many a new state of life. And in these cases we witness an application of one of St Ignatius's chief tenets regarding the Exercises: the necessity of a proper preparation before one is allowed to make a full retreat. He used a simple form of Exercises as a means of preparation for further work. So it took him four years of gradual work before he gave the full retreat to Bl. Peter Faber. The fruit this preparatory work yields in the case of Faber is substantially the same as that gathered by the pious women in Alcalá: peace of the soul and strength to lead a fervent life. As a result of that initial work —which was already a retreat— Faber acquired a deep knowledge of self, a sharp psychological introspection and a greater firmness of will power. But Ignatius did not take four years' preparation with everyone of his retreatants. Still, as far as circumstances allowed it, he used to personally prepare the prospective exercitant and help him acquire the necessary dispositions of soul that would make him fit for the full retreat.

### 3. Different Ends aimed at

At first Ignatius wanted the Exercises to be like the leaven which should transform the people spiritually. This is why he chose a method of popularization, which, if duly applied, should bring about the reform of the family and of society through individuals. In Paris Ignatius used the Exercises to recruit companions for his own way of life. In Venice and in Rome the Exercises had another function, which went a step further. It became necessary to show clearly to influential prelates of the Curia of

what manner of spirit he and his companions were: Ignatius thought there was no better way to accomplish this than by giving them the Exercises, where they could see the nature of his mission and the purpose of his life and apostolate, all directed toward a universal Catholic restoration. It was enough for them to penetrate into the spirit of the Exercises to realize the greatness of the new work Ignatius wanted to launch in support of the Catholic reformation.

From 1539 on, there is a gradual change in the personal objective Ignatius had when giving the Exercises. He is now interested in training directors. Instead of directing the exercitants he concentrates on forming retreat-masters.

#### 4. His Qualities

St Ignatius was a model retreat-master, not only because the Exercises were the expression of his own soul's experiences, but also because of his superlative personal qualities. In the first place a halo of sanctity, fruit of the Exercises, surrounded his whole person; hence his superiority over other people and the attraction which drew to him so many souls. In the natural order we must mention his singular prudence and tact in dealing with all classes of people and his skill in communicating to others his own conviction about the power of the Exercises. Add to these his resourceful mind, quick to adapt itself to varying temperaments and dispositions, and you have a striking set of reasons that made Ignatius the eminent director.

## The Mind of Our Founder on Our Ministries

IN the Society today the word 'ministry' has acquired an extremely wide meaning, covering as it does all the works in which its members —priests, scholastics and brothers— are engaged. Etymologically the word 'ministry' connotes that all we do be done in a spirit of service, with dedication; and the very style of St Ignatius emphatically proclaims this<sup>1</sup>. The Founder does not seem to have ever used the word 'ministerium', but he appears to find a special spiritual relish in speaking of 'missio' and 'mittere'. According to the Epitome (612 § 1) missions are "those apostolic expeditions undertaken by order either of the Sovereign Pontiff or of the Superiors of the Society for the greater glory of God and the help of the souls, as a rule outside our places of residence". But a careful reading of the Constitutions shows that it matters little to St Ignatius whether one is sent to labour in various places or works for souls in, or from, a fixed place of residence. What for him constitutes a mission is the 'commission' received from lawful authority. All those who

1. His text is throbbing with such words and phrases as *servire*, *iuvare*, *divinum obsequium*, *spirituale auxilium*, *animarum auxilium*, *profectum animarum*, etc.

work in the Lord's vineyard have received a commission "whether they be sent to various places . . . , or labour . . . at a fixed and continuous residence . . ." (P.VII, c.1,1). "(The term) mission, therefore, comprises absolutely all those works which can be done according to the Institute, works as varied as the spiritual needs are varied, and to the alleviating of which we devote ourselves in obedience" (Oswald, Comment., n. 601). In this sense residential ministries may certainly be called 'missions': they are among "those *things* by which the houses and colleges of the Society may help the neighbour" (P.VII,c.4,title), they all originate from a 'commission'.

### The Nature of our Ministry

If such is Ignatius's meaning of the term 'mission', we understand why *mobility* is demanded of *all* the members of the Society (Rule 3 of the Summ.) even without a viaticum (P.VI, c.2,13). It also throws much light on the nature of our obedience, which, as Fr Rahner puts it<sup>2</sup>, "means alertness . . . to the divine *call* — a call conveyed . . . by a gradation of human means; a Jesuit's obedience is characterized by a readiness to accept the wholly unexpected, never to build for himself a 'comfortable nest', and never to be a soldier unarmed". In the army of the Church Militant the Jesuits form a commando troop ever 'On His Holiness' Service' (Form. Instit.,n.3). The will to be constantly at the disposal of the Sovereign Pontiff is so essential to the Society, and so deeply Ignatian, that it may be said to have been what kept our first Fathers together before they even thought of forming themselves into a religious society. Thus the conclusion of the original text of the vows taken at Montmartre tells us, "They vowed to place themselves at the disposal of the Vicar of Christ, in order that He might *send* them wherever He thought that the interest of God would be best served"<sup>3</sup>. *Sent to serve*, an admirable way to express Ignatius's mind on the nature of our ministry. Keeping this in mind, it will be easy to understand the

### Norms governing the Choice of Ministries

1. *The end in view.* When the choice of 'missions' is left to the Superiors of the Society, as is ordinarily the case, let them first and foremost keep in mind the end of the Society which is, not simply the service of God and the good of souls, but "the greater service of God and the good of the greater number" (P.VII, c.2,1). For, "the more universal some (aimed-at) good is, the more divine it (also) is" (*ibid.* D).

2. *The means to the end.* The following are the norms that are to guide Superiors in the choice and assignment of ministries:— (Note that the proviso "everything else being equal" must be added before our subdivisions A,B,C, . . . )<sup>4</sup>

2. *The Spirituality of St Ignatius Loyola*, p. 13.

3. Rahner, *lib. cit.*, p. 85.

4. For greater brevity and clarity we are giving the rules in their summarized form, as found in the Epitome nrs 618-626. An excellent French

A. with regard to *places*: Let those places be selected in preference to others (a) which are in *greater need*, owing to both the lack of labourers and the wretched state of the people as well as the danger in which they are of damnation; (b) where more fruitful *results* may be anticipated, because of a more open door, a greater sympathy and facility which may prove helpful; (c) where we are more *indebted* on account of favours done to us; (d) where there are men who, on account of their authority, learning or example, have a *widespread influence* for good; (e) where the *enemy* of Christ the Lord has caused people to be *ill-affected* towards the Society, especially if it is a place of some importance.

B. with regard to *works*: (a) *spiritual* before corporal; (b) the *more perfect* and *better* ones before those that are less perfect and less good; (c) those that are *more urgent* before the less urgent ones; (d) those that are more in accordance with the particular *spirit of our Institute* and which belong in a special way to the Society before those that are taken care of by others; (e) among those that are of equal importance, necessity and urgency, those that are *safer* before the more dangerous ones; those that are *easier* and can be accomplished *more quickly* before those that are more involved and demand more time; (f) the more *universal* ones before the more limited ones, those that produce *more lasting results* before the less permanently or more rarely effective.

C. with regard to *persons*: Let the Superiors send those labourers that are more qualified. (a) For tasks of *greater moment* and in which it is important not to make mistakes, specially picked and tried men ought to be chosen; (b) for *more arduous* enterprises, those who are stronger; (c) for *more dangerous* duties, men that are proven and solidly established in virtue; (d) to *persons in authority* and skilful at management should be sent men who have the gift of discernment and experience in dealing with people as also a somewhat striking appearance that makes for authority (provided the internal qualities be present); (e) to well-gifted, ingenious, *cultured people*, men that are particularly talented and well-versed in letters; (f) to the common people, those who possess a talent for preaching and hearing confessions.

D. with regard to the *number* to be sent and to suitably *combining* them: (a) if possible at all, let no one be sent alone but with at least one companion, that they may help each other and share the work between them; (b) if two are sent, let their talents for the ministry be complementary: to one of little experience add one of much experience; to one who is fiery and full of energy, one who is more reserved. But their difference of temperaments should result in mutual help through the bond of charity, not in discord; (c) more than two may be sent, so long as the work is of great moment and the thing can be done without detriment to other works for the universal good.

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translation of the text of this ch.2 of Part VII was published in *Christus*, Jan. 1955, pp. 103-111.

E. with regard to *external conditions* surrounding the mission: let the Superior always have in view a greater edification and the greater service of God in all circumstances, such as whether those sent will proceed like poor men do, or more comfortably.

F. with regard to the *time*: The time to be devoted to each mission is to be measured by the importance and nature of the spiritual employments, the need of him who is being helped, the fruits hoped for, the number of men available, the works that are waiting for us elsewhere.

G. When labourers have to be *transferred*, the Superior should try his best not to offend or ill-dispose those from whom they are taken away, but to preserve their goodwill.

H. with regard to *liberty of movement* and *choice of work*:  
(a) if someone is sent, either by the Sovereign Pontiff or by the Superiors of the Society, to a large country of which no particular and definite part is assigned to him, he may stay in some places for a longer or shorter period of time, or keep travelling over the whole country or a whole district, according to what he judges best; (b) *a fortiori* may the Superiors give him directions as to his movements, so long as these do not go counter to the commission given by the Holy See, to whom foremost and supreme obedience is to be rendered; (c) wherever one be staying, unless he is under orders to employ clearly-defined means, he may choose from among the traditional ministries of the Society those he deems more suitable. He will, however, obtain greater security from consulting his Superior about the kind of means to employ.

### Application of the Norms

It needs no emphasis that these rules are designed to ensure and preserve the character of greater service and mobility that is to mark the ministries of the Society. This 'greater service' is further stressed in the directions given about ministries exercised in, or from, our Houses and Colleges (ch. 4 of P.VII). You will find there the expression "helping the neighbour" no less than thirteen times in nineteen paragraphs. St Ignatius seems obsessed by 'the greater good of the neighbour and his spiritual edification', and he wants no means overlooked: good example (first of all); pious desires and prayers; Holy Mass; the Sacraments, especially confession and Holy Communion; preaching, teaching of the Christian doctrine; private conversations; giving of the Spiritual Exercises; spiritual works of mercy; writing . . . He goes straight after the essentials, after what is a matter of life and death and, given life, after what leads the souls to the highest summits of perfection: Holy Mass; the Sacraments, the ministry of the word, catechism, the Spiritual Exercises. History is a witness to how much these have promoted the greater glory of God and the greater good of many.<sup>5</sup>

5. These ministries were already enumerated in detail in the *Formulas of the Institute* presented to Paul III and Julius III, n. 1.

We ought also to mention the all-important ministry of education itself, through schools and colleges, which was already begun in the time of St Ignatius, "for the building up (and development) in learning and character of externs more even than of Ours" (P.VII,c.11,1). "Motivated by the same principle that a good is so much the more divine as it is more universal, the Society, from the very beginning of its history, has esteemed above others, and cultivated with the greatest zeal, the ministry of educating youths both in high schools and universities."<sup>6</sup>

As to our 'modern' ministries, the Society remained strikingly faithful to St Ignatius's norms: the apostolate among Eastern Christians, Catholic or dissident (Epit. 636a (or) *bis*), the social apostolate (636b-d (or) *ter-quinquies*, 680), scientific work (685a (or) AR XI, p.315,n.5), certain devotions to be fostered or pious associations to be promoted: Apostleship of Prayer, Sodalities . . . all these provide for special needs of the Church and are undertaken at the special call of the Holy Father:—

Apostolic labours among Eastern Christians "magni fiant ex voluntate Sanctae Sedis"; the social apostolate is reckoned "inter urgentiora huius temporis ministeria", its aim is to win back *the masses* ("tota proletariorum multitudo") to Christ and the Church (680 § 3). And as to scientific research work, "It is your duty" said the present Holy Father to the Delegates of the 29th General Congregation "to be, not only religious men, but also men of great learning . . . And if (the members of the Society) ought especially to cultivate the Faith, they ought also . . . —following in the glorious footsteps of their Institute—to pursue the advancement of the sciences with all their abilities and along all lines, convinced that by this path, rugged though it be, they can make a mighty contribution to the greater glory of God and the upbuilding of His Church."

### Exclusions dictated by these Norms

Even the exclusion of certain ministries and of certain traditional exercises of the Religious Life were dictated by St Ignatius's solicitude for our mobility and liberty of action in the ministry: no choir nor conventional Masses (P.VI,c.3,4); no Foundation Masses in our churches nor any similar duty that would restrict our mobility (*ibid.* 6); no direction of religious Sisters (*ibid.* 5). Sung Masses, yes on Sundays and Feasts and "*tono quodam devoto, suavi et simplici*", to attract people to more frequent Confession and to listening to sermons and instruction—but no florid and sonorous musical entertainments, "*cantu figurato vel firmo*" (*ibid.* B).

In the same line again, the first reason which the Founder gives for our accepting no stipends or remunerations for our ministries (Formula Instit.,n.1) is, according to Fr Coemans<sup>7</sup>, "greater freedom of action", (the second being "greater edification of the

6. Letter of V. R. Fr Janssens on our ministries, n. 6, AR XI (1947), p. 319.

7. Commentary on the Rules of the S. of J., n. 383, On R. 27.

neighbour"). And if Ignatius was so uncompromisingly and so steadfastly opposed to a cardinal's hat or a bishop's mitre for any of his sons, it was once more greatly to safeguard our mobility: To King Ferdinand who was asking for Jesuit bishops the Saint replied that the surest and most efficacious way he could think of for destroying the Society would be to allow its members to be thus fettered down. "This Society and all its members are banded together in one and the same spirit, viz. to be ready to leave for any part of the world, among the faithful or the infidels, at the first word of command of the Supreme Pontiff. It is the characteristic trait of its members to be attached to no one particular locality, but in simplicity and humility to travel from town to town and from place to place. This was sanctioned by the Holy See, as we have it from the Papal Bulls which say of us 'they were, one may believe it in the Lord, inspired by the Holy Spirit'. If, therefore, we departed from this simplicity of ours, it would be tantamount to destroying our spirit and wrecking our vocation; it would mean the ruin of our Society; . . . it would jeopardize the more universal good." (*Mon. Ign. I, 1, 541*)

### Conclusion

The Society is a missionary Order, not because 'foreign missions' are an important part of the ministries it undertakes, nor because everyone of its members must ever be ready "to travel to various places"; nor even because its professed of the four vows are bound by the additional virtue of religion to accept any particular assignment given them by the Holy See: but because every assignment made to every member of the Society is a temporary (and revocable) 'commission' entrusted to them in the name of Christ and His Church until the universal good persuades the Superiors to assign them some other one. "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me" said Christ our Lord (Mt.28/18-19) "you, therefore, must go out all-over the world, and preach the gospel to the whole of creation . . .". And again, "I came upon an errand from my Father, and now I am sending you out in my turn" (Jo.20/21). Every assignment made to any Jesuit is but a precise and specific particularization of that general 'mission' to which our Lord sent him out by calling him to the Society. Such, at least, is the concept which our holy Founder had of our 'ministries', which come to us, of the Company of Jesus, through the hierarchic channels of the Holy See and our Superiors.

J. HOGBIN

## St Ignatius and the Eucharist

**T**O DAY when daily Communion is a fairly common practice and all the great private revelations have had the effect of increasing devotion to the Eucharist, it may be difficult for us to realize the situation as it was in the world when Ignatius began his work. In all of Christian Europe Catholicism had at

that time all the aspects of an old and settled institution which had lost its first fervour. In Spain itself, where the faith was fiercely adhered to, the moral tone had degenerated, to say the least; though there were also to be found some great saints and mystics. In Italy and Rome in particular, the Renaissance had brought-in a neo-paganism that was threatening to drag down the very citadel of Christianity. This oldness and settledness was not confined to the attitude of the people alone: it had also infected the clergy and the religious in the monasteries and convents. The best of the Popes had long been alarmed at the many unworthy candidates for the priesthood; and the bishops, when they were not themselves too busy grabbing more benefices, were disturbed at the laxity of the people and the clergy. One sign, perhaps the most telling sign, of this laxity was the neglect of the very means for keeping up, and increasing, the life of Christ within men. Today when it is not unusual in our parishes and missions to have thousands of Communions each week, it is hard for us to see how such a neglect could have arisen in the Church. Yet it is a fact that then, even in monasteries, it was unusual for the religious to communicate more than six or seven times a year, and the faithful would hardly ever think of doing more than their Easter duties. Before such a background it was that Ignatius appeared with his practice of frequent Communion.

It always takes a man of great stature to swim against the current of his times. When the whole world around us is accepting some erroneous idea or engaging in some pervert practice, it demands a high degree of moral courage to stand up and tell them they are wrong. This is especially true when the idea or the practice abets man's this-worldliness or pampers his desire to take it easy. Thus it was somewhat inevitable that Ignatius would meet with all the forces of reaction against his idea of more frequently receiving the Sacraments.

There were not wanting in his day those who sought to justify their staying away from the Sacrament by claiming that they were not worthy and that to receive Communion unworthily was to be "guilty of the Body and Blood of Christ". Ignatius, as by instinct, takes another standpoint: "Reception (of Holy Communion)" he notes in the Spiritual Exercises [44, 3] "will not only strengthen (the exercitant) against falling into sin, but will also help him to retain the increase of grace which he has gained." Since the Holy Eucharist was instituted for us to use as food, for us to 'grow strong' in the spiritual life, it would be unwise to starve ourselves, ignoring Christ's command, "unless you eat of my Flesh and drink of my Blood, you can have no life in yourselves". Still, those who insisted they were not worthy, and refrained from receiving, might have done less harm if they had kept their counsel to themselves: but they went on to teach it as a doctrine. From these people and their disciples Ignatius was bound to meet with most harassing opposition.

At Barcelona, his practice and teaching of weekly Communion gave rise to carping criticism, some speaking of it as irreverent

presumption, others as extravagant hypocrisy. The result was that Ignatius's 'converts' had to go to different churches to avoid criticism. At Alcalá, one of the charges brought against him before the Inquisition was precisely this practice of frequent Communion. He insisted upon a judgement —was it heretical? No, they had to admit... At Paris, he was threatened with a horse-whipping if he did not give up the practice. This was averted by his quietly pointing out the scandal that would be given if he were so punished merely for doing what Christ said and what the Apostles and early Christians did.

Despite these and other obstacles and oppositions, Ignatius kept stressing the practice and finding ever new ways of presenting it and spreading it among those he could influence. Early in the years of his conversion he had been granted a vision in which he says he saw "clearly with the eyes of his soul in what way our Lord, Jesus Christ, true God and true Man, is truly hidden in that divine mystery beneath that veil and species of bread". This was enough for him to see that there was no better weapon to be used in the spiritual warfare for which he had enlisted. Consider the plan of the Spiritual Exercises and reflect on how much time is spent therein in getting acquainted with, and growing enthusiastic over, the personality of Christ. It is no wonder that Ignatius should have laid so much stress on the practice which brought one into such intimate contact with the Great King. He considered Holy Communioin as the sacramental equivalent of the other practice, viz. mental prayer, in both of which one should draw ever closer to Christ, our Leader. In the one case, the drawing closer happens sacramentally, *ex opere operato*, while in the other it is done consciously and depends largely on our own efforts. This is just one example of how Ignatius insisted upon a nice balance between what we can do for ourselves and the great work which God must do for us.

Quite typical of a man who realizes he has to overcome a settled ingrained habit of his times, Ignatius neglected no means to get his ideas across. Right from the start he began exhorting others to follow his example. The practice of frequent Communion was the first thing he insisted upon as an aid to perpetuating the effects of the Spiritual Exercises. It was the fundamental practice of the groups he gathered around him in Spain, and later of his first companions in Paris. When General of the Society he sought and obtained special favours from the Pope for a confraternity back in Spain whose main rule was the practice of monthly Communion. Also as General he encouraged every effort of his sons to spread this practice —it was one of his first recommendations to anyone sent out on some mission.

And let us not have some vague impression that he started, almost unwittingly, a movement that was 'in the air' anyway, a 'popular' movement. The very opposition he met with from all the weight of inertia in the clergy and the people shows that he had to make immense efforts to get anything at all done in this line.

of reform. His glory lies in the fact that his efforts were successful. Even in his lifetime he could look back on a grand record of many devotees of frequent Communion formed by himself or his sons. The practice of weekly Communion was incorporated in the rules he wrote, and the spirit of his movement continued to inspire the Society after his death. It would not be an exaggeration to say that his work while alive, and his intercession after death, contributed in great measure directly to all the constant urgings of the Church and the Saints, to the spirited struggle of the Society against Jansenism, and even to the ultimate approval of daily Communion by St Pius X. His efforts never stirred the spiritual enthusiasm of the crowds: they remained clogged by opposition all the way; his ideal never became the common practice of his day and he did not live to see what we witness now. Yet it was what he did that really started to give us what we have today —a real respect for, and a fervent devotion to, and a constant use of, the greatest Gift that God ever made to Man.

H. COVELY

## Ignatian Prayer and Activity

(“*In Actione Contemplativi*”)

“**T**HE end of this Society is not only to attend to the salvation and perfection of our own souls with the divine grace, but with the same earnestly to employ ourselves in procuring the salvation and perfection of our neighbour.” In these words St Ignatius outlines the purpose of the Society of Jesus.<sup>1</sup>

Hence a twofold end of the Society. The first conforms to the end of the religious life, which is defined by Fr Cotel as a state of life wherein the members make profession of tending to perfection.<sup>2</sup> The second aim is proper to the Society, and gives it an apostolic orientation, with this distinguishing trait that it presses into its service every form of activity that may serve its purpose of winning souls to God. However, the Society is preferential in its apostolic activities with a bias in favour of the spiritual over the corporal works of mercy.<sup>3</sup>

These two ends of the Society are not independent of each other —two parallel lines which do not meet. Equating growth in holiness with the deepening of the contemplative spirit, it may be said that a Jesuit is not a contemplative at his prie-dieu and an apostle when he is evangelizing the people, not a dual personality. To look on action and contemplation in this light is to misunderstand the mind of St Ignatius. The two aims are interdependent and compenetrating. Activity does not grow less intense for being joined to contemplation: rather does it

1. General Examen, Ch. I, n. 2.

2. Cotel, *Catechism of the Vows*.

3. Formula Instituti a Julio III approbata, para. 1.

derive its inspiration and its vigour from contemplation, as is evident from the lives of its saints. Nor does contemplation grow cold by the diffusion of its inner fire: rather does the fire glow with greater warmth, feeding on activity.

The upshot of this is that it is the merest folly for a Jesuit to flee activity in the pursuit of contemplation. Such an ideal of sanctity is chimerical. For a Jesuit, contemplative isolation bears within itself the dissolution of death; so that what is good for a Carthusian or the monastic orders, becomes for a Jesuit the great temptation leading him away from God.

This temptation to isolation, this desire to feed the fires of devotion on a contemplation divorced from activity or greatly in excess of activity, assailed the Society almost from its inception. Spain became the battle-ground where the duel was fought, with contemplation steadily mounting to the ascendancy; so that St Ignatius had to interpose his authority and redress the balance. He expressed his mind on the subject in a letter to Father Nadal:

"All should endeavour in the Lord, when they walk in the way of prayer and the spiritual life, to find God in all their ministries and labours. The relish, the love for prayer that urges them to seek the solitude of a retreat that is not of obligation, does not seem proper to the Society. What is proper to us is a prayer that urges us to the obedience that our Institute demands. Thus the prayer proper to the Society includes the exercise of vocal prayer and all the ministries of the Society. It consists in this, that with the grace of our Lord, the lights of the understanding, the good affections of the will, persevering union with God (even outside of prayer properly so called), accompany and guide all our actions, so that we find God in all things. Our prayer should be such that it increases in us the spiritual taste for labour . . . and the labour should increase virtue and delight in prayer." (Nadal, *Epistolae*, Vol. IV, 673-674)

### The Problem to be solved

Action and contemplation seem to be mutually exclusive and opposed. Activity detracts from contemplation; for when the mind is immersed in a multiplicity of external cares, and its energies directed to varied fields of human exertion and endeavour, it loses that repose and peace in which alone communion with oneself and the Infinite is possible. Holy men of every age have discovered God in deep silence and solitude, not in noise and confusion, and this is the justification for the silence and simplicity and austerity of monastic discipline. For it is only in such tranquility that the mind can turn inwards upon itself until it discovers itself in its primary and most fundamental constituent. To discover this self is indeed to discover God, without whom self becomes unintelligible. Self-discovery is, in the last analysis, the discovery of our contingency, our dependence on God, who is seen to be at once the origin and the term of self.

It therefore seems logical to conclude that, the more a man is immersed in activity, the less fitted he is for contemplation and vice versa. Hence it is that the contemplative and monastic orders viewed with misgivings the active orders when they first made their appearance in the Church's ranks. That a monk

should lose himself in apostolic work seemed contradictory to every tenet of the religious life. He was courting certain disaster by thus flouting the monastic wisdom of centuries.

And yet, there is no denying the fact that in the Middle Ages some of the greatest contemplatives were also the greatest apostles. St Bernard is a case in point. He left his monastery to battle for the Church. But in him there is noticeable a certain constraint. He is still chained down to tradition. His is a soul that leaves the cloister with reluctance and, when out of it, harks back with a certain wistfulness to a life of pure contemplation. St Francis and St Dominic proved in their own lives, as Bernard had done, that activity was not inconsistent with the highest contemplation; that, indeed, contemplation had to overflow into activity. St Thomas sums up the case for the Friars Preachers in the following well-known passage:

"There is an active life which proceeds from the fulness of contemplation, such as teaching, and preaching . . . And this work is more excellent than simple contemplation. For even as it is better to enlighten than merely to shine, so it is better to give to others the fruits of one's contemplation than merely to contemplate. Accordingly, the highest place amongst religious orders is held by those which are engaged in teaching and preaching . . . The second place belongs to those which are engaged in contemplation, and the third to those which are occupied with external activity." (*Summa Theologica*, IIa IIae, q.188,a.6; see also III, 40, 1, ad 2)

It is conceivable that the sacred ministry should, in a way, be a continuation of contemplation. Contact with sacred things lifts the mind to God, so that in preaching, for example, the pulpit becomes a mountain-top from which the torch, enkindled in prayer, shines out upon a darkling world. But will the light of contemplation burn as brightly in purely secular concerns which have been harnessed to the service of religion? Will not secular pursuits, however legitimate the end for which they are pursued, cool the ardour of contemplation? The problem has to be faced since the militia of Ignatius are to be in the thick of the fight, immersed in secular undertakings. They are to be in the world but not of the world, and they can only keep from floundering if they carry contemplation into the worldly activities adopted by them as means to the establishment of the kingdom of God —in a word, if they are 'in actione contemplativi'.

### The Solution

At the outset it is, therefore, very necessary to distinguish explicit prayer, during which time prayer is our one and only occupation, and implicit prayer, which may be termed a spirit of prayer or a prayerful attitude to work. The second kind of prayer is dependent on the first and flows from it: there can be no implicit prayer unless the soul has drunk deep at the divine fountains in explicit prayer.

The paradox, if I might say so, of St Ignatius, is that a man who spent almost a whole year in prayer and solitude in the cave of Manresa and who was visited by God with the highest

mystic graces, should, when he came to found the Society of Jesus, have reduced formal prayer to the bare minimum. He did, it is true, leave a large measure of liberty in the matter of formal prayer to those who had completed their training, but for those still in formation he fixed, in addition to the Mass, one hour of prayer which included the two examens of conscience; and no arguments could shake his decision. Father Nadal tried to argue him out of his stand; but St Ignatius cut him short with the curt answer: "For a man who is really mortified, a quarter of an hour will be enough to find God in prayer."<sup>4</sup>

Not that St Ignatius was the avowed enemy of lengthy prayer. Nothing could be further from the truth. It is preposterous to lay such a charge to the door of the author of the "Exercises", the religious innovator who added a second year to the period of noviceship and rounded off the religious formation of his men with a third year of probation. St Ignatius believed very strongly in formal prayer, but his attitude to it was dictated by a highly realistic approach to the purpose for which the Society of Jesus was founded.

Ignatius's Society, as has often been repeated, was a company of picked soldiers, shock troops, ready to hurl themselves into the thick of the fight. They would need prayer, but they could not delay over it and surrender themselves to its delights. The moment prayer encroached on activity, it detracted from the end of the Society. St Ignatius had come face to face with this temptation when he went back to the class-room to study the rudiments of Latin. It was so much easier for him to lose himself in contemplation than to steer clear of solecisms in an unfamiliar tongue; and he found himself sucked more than once into the abyss of contemplation with his task undone. Examining this occurrence in the light of his experience with various spirits, he soon unmasked the devil. Hence he felt the urgency of curtailing formal prayer, whilst developing the spirit of prayer. Henceforward God was to be discovered in his daily round of duties. Activity was to be his Jacob's ladder raising him to heaven. Explicit prayer which kept him away from activity had in large measure yielded to implicit prayer which sanctified activity even as it heightened its efficiency.

We are at the heart of Ignatian spirituality. This is to be the hall-mark of his sons. Contemplation and activity are not two watertight compartments, not two independent goals to be pursued. They are one: activity inspiring contemplation and in turn being inspired by it. We are one stage in advance of the 'contemplata aliis tradere' of St Thomas. There the influence was one-sided, here it is mutually consolidating. As Fr Brou says,

In prayer the worker acquires an aptitude of dealing successfully with his neighbour. The soul is purified in prayer, the better to purify others. In prayer the soul acquires a knowledge of the virtues that it has to preach.

4. Nadal, op.cit. pp. 250-251.

It progresses in the divine union, the last and supreme secret of a powerful influence. Is it necessary to remark that all great apostles have been men of prayer? . . . This is what counts, and it is just this that the good workman will find in his prayer. Contemplation will be for him a certain repose in God. It will be especially a source of enthusiasm in labour, of self-forgetfulness in success, and of spiritual joy in humiliations.

But this is not all. If contemplation makes labour fruitful, labour in turn should nourish contemplation. And this is a point which is usually overlooked by the authors. Yet it is no more than right. Each one's spiritual life must be in keeping with his vocation. If it must be, it can be. Pure contemplatives do not always understand this, or they lose sight of it. They see danger, dissipation of soul, the thwarting of recollection, in a life of labour. And they are not wrong in this. But they do not see with sufficient clearness the returns to the priest in confessions heard, Communions distributed, God's word explained, the catechism taught, all of which offer occasion for the sacrifice of repose, of one's tastes, and sometimes of one's health. Literally it is to be a man crucified to the world and to whom the world is crucified... Now, of all preparations for prayer, self-denial is the most essential. The true apostle is drawn to prayer, to contemplation, to the interior life in all its forms, by the very needs of his activity. (*Ignatian Methods of Prayer*, pp. 29-30)

Such contemplation in activity and activity in contemplation is found to be theologically sound once we equate contemplation with charity, which has a twofold material object: God and the neighbour. Our love of God will necessarily flow on to our neighbour, made to His image and likeness, and our love of the neighbour is true charity only if we love him for the sake of God. The two are found to be mutually supporting.

Father Danielou has seen this charity to lie at the heart of the missionary problem:

The source of the apostolate is not necessity but the exigency of love. What must arouse the missionary vocation in us is, first of all, not the need of souls to be saved, but love of God which leads us to want Him to be known and loved. The authentic missionary call has its origin in the pain we feel because Christ is not known or loved. Now, this exigency of love is more urgent than any necessity could be. Here we have a twofold movement: we desire to bring Christ to souls, and we desire to bring souls to Christ. Too often, we think only of the first: that we must bring Christ to souls. If we go no farther than that, there is danger that our missionary call will not be urgent enough, and may run foul of certain objections. But if we also insist on the other aspect: that we want to bring souls to Christ because this is the only efficacious proof of love we can give Him (indeed, we can add nothing to His interior glory, but only to His external glory), then, the apostolic spirit, flowing from a love of Christ, takes on an implacable urgency. It is in this love that the great Apostles have found their elan towards souls. 'Where', Saint Ignatius once wrote to some young religious, 'is the majesty of our God adored? Where are His infinite goodness and His infinite patience known?' (*The Salvation of the Nations*, p. 111)

### How is the Jesuit to acquire this active contemplation?

The first and indispensable disposition is that he have a "right intention not only in his state of life, but in all particulars, seeking in them always sincerely to please the divine Goodness for itself and for the charity and singular benefits wherewith it has prevented us, . . . and in all things let him seek God, casting off as much as is possible all love of creatures, that he may

place his whole affection on the Creator of them, loving Him in all creatures and them all in Him, according to His most holy and divine Will.”<sup>5</sup>

Commenting on this text which has become the 17th rule of the summary, Fr Coemans says, “This Rule is an application of the Society’s watchword: A.M.D.G. and of the 2nd Rule of the Summary. It is a compendium of what the Book of Exercises teaches in The Foundation and in The Contemplation for Obtaining Love.”<sup>6</sup>

St Ignatius tirelessly urges this purity of intention on his disciples. He himself was a man with a single purpose in life, loyal in the extreme, consumed with a mighty passion for Christ. It was this passion which gave unity and cohesion to his life; and he desired that the same single-minded devotedness to Christ should characterize the members of the Society. He exacted this purity of intention in studies (Const. S.J. IV,6,nn.1,2) in teaching (IV,16,n.4), in the choice of ministries (VII,2,n.1).

But purity of intention is not contemplation. It is a predisposition. The contemplative has to see deeper into creation and into work undertaken for God, if he is to justify his name. He has somehow to contact God present in all things, so that everything he undertakes, or comes in touch with, deepens his union with God. How this is to be achieved is shown in the Contemplation for Obtaining Love, which is the bridge linking formal prayer, with which the exercitant has been busy, and the active life to which he is about to return. But the active life of the exercitant can never be quite the same as before he tasted God in solitude and prayer. There will be a residue of prayer colouring that activity and transforming it. Explicit prayer will have yielded to implicit prayer, and contemplation will transform activity into praise of God.

In the first point of the Contemplation for Obtaining Love, St Ignatius passes in review the countless favours we have received from God. These gifts are not mere conveniences and comforts, the appurtenances of life. Over and above their actual existence, they have a special significance. They, in a sense, transcend themselves, becoming symbolic of a higher good, a special predilection on God’s part for me. His love has become incarnate in these gifts; they are the exteriorization of Charity (*Deus est Caritas*), so that I am enfolded in God’s love, immersed in it, and experience the joy of His embrace. The result is a heady joy, an intoxication of the spirit reaching down to the depths of the exercitant’s being, sweeping him off his feet to the great outpouring of the *Sume et Suscipe*.

All this is calculated to instil into the mind of the exercitant a sense of God’s Providence; but it is not a Providence which

5. Const. III, 1, 26.

6. Coemans, *Commentary on the Rules*: rule 17.

works on, and governs the world from without. It is a Providence that is immanent to the world and to men, so that the discerning eye, whose vision has been sharpened in prayer, will "see God in all things and them all in Him". The world will be recognized to be instinct with divinity, because, as the Apostle says, in Him we live and move and have our being. It is only thus that the contemplative will keep in touch with God away from his prie-dieu and convert activity into a prayer.

St Ignatius accordingly invites the exercitant in the second place "to consider how God dwells in creatures, in the elements giving them being, in the plants giving them growth, in animals giving them feeling, and in men giving them understanding, and so in me giving me being, life, feeling, and causing me to understand; making likewise of me a temple, since I am created to the likeness and image of His Divine Majesty". If this is true of the natural order, it is all the more true of the supernatural order which comes into existence by the infusion of sanctifying grace. For grace is in its ultimate analysis the immediate possession of, and union of ourselves with, God as He is in Himself. God has become our portion exceeding great and we have become His sons.

But God does more than merely dwell in creatures. God is active in all of them. This is the substance of the third point; and so the exercitant must "consider how God works and labours for me in all created things on the face of the earth (*habet se ad modum laborantis*): in the elements, plants, fruit, cattle, etc., giving them being, preserving them, giving them growth and feeling, etc. And then to reflect on myself."

"And then to reflect on myself." Human activity, scholastic philosophy tells us, is a finite participation of the *Actus Purus*. This activity which is a tendency implanted in our very nature proves the existence of an object outside itself which is the end of man and in the possession of which alone he will find rest. "We are made for Thee, O God, and our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee." All human activity is possible only because of this primary tendency seeking out its object, which is the Infinite. Hence in every act man touches on God. Every human act is possible only because man possesses a nature which opens out onto God.

In the supernatural order man's activity is still more closely bound up with God. The contact is the closest imaginable since man's activity is informed by grace. This is especially true of the priest in his administration of the sacraments, but it is no less true of other works in which men are used by God to infuse grace into souls. Such a means or instrument the religious undoubtedly is, given the divine character of every genuine vocation. Hence the duty of the religious to dispose himself to the influence of the principal agent in the work of sanctification, namely, God.

The notion of instrumentality in the apostolic ministry was a cardinal point with St Ignatius. In part X of the Constitutions, n. 2, he says, "The means which unite the instrument to God, making him docile in the divine hands, are uprightness, virtue, especially charity, a pure intention of serving God, familiarity with God in prayer, a sincere zeal that aims only at the glory of the Creator and Redeemer of souls, virtues which are more efficacious for good than merely human talents. These latter prepare merely for an influence upon men."

This notion of instrumentality is rich in contemplative content. For an instrument, inasmuch as it is an instrument, necessarily implies the influx, and therefore the presence, of the principal agent, God. He is intimately present to us, so that we become co-workers with Him in the work of redemption.

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Such are the means proposed by St Ignatius to those who wish to combine action with contemplation. We have it on the authority of Ribadeneira that St Ignatius praised most frequently and considered the best of all prayers, that which "is made by keeping our hearts always fixed on God"<sup>7</sup>. The highest prayer thus comes to be a life lived in the presence of God. Such a prayer need not draw on the imagination, nor does it require a conscious attention to God. It is rather an awareness of God in much the same way, but on the supernatural plane, as a mother is aware of her child, the lover of the beloved. It is a presence of God to the soul, a union that transcends the moment and the occupation, "a lively and attentive apprehension by faith. God is where we seek him. We believe it, and we act on the belief by maintaining an attitude of respect."<sup>8</sup>

In this way explicit prayer glides without interruption or break into implicit prayer, and activity becomes ensouled with contemplation. Personal sanctification, which is our union with God, reaches out to His presence in creation and particularly in man who bears His image. Everything is loved in God and for God, because He abides in all creatures and they all in Him. The contemplative apostle and missionary sanctifies created things, pouring out on them the chrism of charity; and created things in turn sanctify him, because, bearing the impress of divinity, they sweep his mind back unto God. He realizes that life and activity have to be sanctified even as they have to sanctify, and that they sanctify in the measure in which they are sanctified. For the Jesuit saint is not a man who escapes from creation as from something unholy, but a man who escapes into creation to discover God and love Him who is at the heart of creation.

New York, Oct. 1955

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7. Ribadeneira, *Scripta I*, 431-432.

8. Brou, op.cit. p. 46.

# Holy Desires

"Never a longing in His Heart hast thou disappointed"—Ps.20,v.3

"THE first duty of the Rector", writes St Ignatius in his constitutions, "is to be the spiritual support of the whole college, by his prayers and holy desires". (P.IV, c.10, n.5 [424])

While insisting on this same primary office of the General, our Founder goes on to explain it more at length: "He will govern the Society, first of all, by the authority and example of his life, by the charity and love for the Society in our Lord, by assiduous prayer that is full of desires, and by Holy Masses which will obtain grace for the welfare and development of the Society. He must consider these means to be of the greatest importance, and in them he must place full confidence in the Lord. For these are the most efficacious means to obtain graces from the Divine Majesty." (P.IX, c.4, n.3 [790])

When speaking of the ministries of the Society, St Ignatius mentions first that of good example. Then he proceeds to say, "The neighbour is also helped by holy desires and prayers offered to God for the whole Church." After enumerating the more important intentions to be prayed for, he gives his reason for his choice: "in order that God may deign to dispose the souls of all men to receive His grace through the weak instruments of this very least Society". (P.VII, c.4, n.3)[638])

From these texts we gather that our Founder not only gives the primary importance in the apostolate to prayer, but that he also wants this prayer to be combined with desires, nay, to be full of desires. What does this mean?

Ardent desires must be the inspiration and the very soul of our prayers. The fervour and intensity of our prayer depends on the keenness and ardour of the desires that animate it. The more we desire above all God's greater glory, and consequently the coming of His Kingdom in the souls of men, the more anxious will we be to pray for the great intentions of the Church, and for the souls of those entrusted to our care and to the care of the whole Society. One prays ardently only for the things one desires ardently. In fact, our very desire is a prayer, as St Augustine says—"Our very desire is our prayer. We pray uninterruptedly by an unceasing desire. Our heart cries out to God through its burning charity"<sup>1</sup>. These last words of the Doctor of Grace leads us to a better understanding of what is the source of those desires i.e. the burning ardour of our love for God. The greater the love of God is in a soul, the more intensive and extensive are the desires which animate its prayer as well as its work. As the degree of our love constitutes the degree of holiness and perfection of our soul;

1. *Ipsum desiderium tuum oratio tua est, et si continuum desiderium. continua oratio. Flagrantia caritatis clamor cordis est* (Enarr. in Ps. 37,10).

so also does it give value and force to our prayer, making it more pleasing to God and, therefore, more efficacious to obtain graces for others.

To one who has grasped the primary importance of prayer animated by ardent desires, this thought can be most consoling. One so often feels the limitations of one's efforts, of one's work, and of one's time. But desires cannot be restricted by such limits. It is only our selfishness that limits our desires, by preventing God's love from filling our soul unreservedly.

In the spiritual writings of Fr Layonnet, a French Jesuit, we find this striking passage: "Never to restrict my desire of conquering souls to the field of my apostolic labours. My desire is much vaster. My apostolic action is, so to say, a proof of my desire, which tends, if it is sincere, to total self-oblation. I sanctify myself for the whole world, for the whole Mystical Body. This is not pride; it is a question of the glory of the Father, of the happiness of my brethren. Besides, as a priest the Sacred Liturgy obliges me to offer 'pro totius mundi salute'. I am limited in everything: health, knowledge, practical sense, activity; but the love of God in me is only limited by my egoism. I must open my heart and soul to all different kinds of conquests of souls: Catholic Action, masses of workmen, union of separated Churches, missions, the pagans all over the world. My soul must be tormented by all these. My priestly heart must think of all these at the Offertory. These must be the fuel for my sacrifices, my care night and day, my habitual prayer."

L. SCHILLEBEECKX

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### Says St Ignatius

#### about CURBING SENSUALITY

The repression of sensuality can mean two things. It can mean that, when by reason and the grace of God we become aware of sensual leanings opposed to God's will and sinful, we repress them out of fear and love of Him. Since we are not allowed to sin for any motive, it is certainly good to curb oneself in such a way, even if bodily weakness or worse physical ills should result.

But it can also mean repression of the sense appetites when they crave something in which there is no sin at all, such as recreation or the like. Such repression, although undertaken out of a wish to mortify oneself and embrace the cross, is neither for all men nor for all times. Occasionally, in order to recoup our forces for the better and longer service of God, it is more meritorious to take some lawful physical recreation than to curb our inclinations. (*Mon. Ign. I,12,151*)

to Fr Casanova, Tivoli, July 20, 1556

*Cum permissu Superiorum*

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